



## From the Commissioner's Desk

When I served as the Department of the Treasury's Under Secretary for Enforcement, I had a unique vantage point from which to look at Treasury law enforcement programs. I saw the roles and missions of all of the enforcement arms of the Treasury Department simultaneously. It became obvious to me that none was bigger, or more demanding, complex, or challenging than the Customs Service. None had a richer history or was more important to the future of the United States. So, for me, it was a distinct honor in August 1998 to take the oath of office as Commissioner of Customs.

As Commissioner, I am accountable for Customs overall performance, and for objectively reporting performance results to our constituents. I am proud to have these roles. Customs great work needs to be made known – we have been too good at keeping the stories of our successes a secret in the past.

This Fiscal Year (FY) 1998 Accountability Report gets the comprehensive word out on our performance. It provides a snapshot of Customs workload, accomplishments, and financial position for the fiscal year. As a fact-based scorecard of our operational and financial performance, the Accountability Report helps lay the foundation for future improvements.

While plans for these improvements are in place, no one in Customs expects FY 1999 to be an easy one. Foremost, the criminal enterprises we combat are international in scope. Their approaches to breaking the law are innovative and sometimes unpredictable. Criminal ingenuity comes in every conceivable form, in very different sizes, and with varied levels of financial resources.

Besides a broad spectrum of crime, the world is experiencing an explosion in legitimate trade and travel. With the United States seeing growth rates of up to 10 percent per year in these areas, it is projected our total imports and exports will reach \$2.6 trillion in the year 2000. At the same time, Customs officers will likely process more than 500 million people coming or going by air, land, and sea. The work required of Customs to expedite legitimate trade and travel, while enforcing the law, continues to grow proportionately.

Customs is at the crossroads of where legitimate trade and criminal activity intersect. In this juncture, Customs will focus on:

- disrupting and dismantling narcotics trafficking and money laundering organizations in support of the National Drug Control and International Crime Control Strategies;
- protecting U.S. economic interests, national security, and safety by maximizing import and export compliance through a balanced program of informed compliance, targeted enforcement actions, and facilitated complying cargo;
- allowing the expeditious movement of low-risk travelers by targeting, identifying, and examining high-risk travelers;
- leveraging resources to meet crucial technology needs; and
- developing a Customs enterprise automated systems architecture.

With this ambitious agenda in place, Customs will continue to provide great value to the Nation's taxpayers as it has throughout its history. Through this report, we clearly and objectively provide to the public and the Congress information on the fruits of our efforts. We invite our constituents to work with us so we can continue to meet their needs while living up to our enforcement and regulatory commitments.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond W. Kelly".

